Capture of Damascus Crowning Triumph in Arabs' Campaign

apt. Bott Tells How the Desert Fighters Cut the Turkish Forces to Pieces in a Whirlwind Charge-Escape of British Prisoners From the Black Hole of Constantinople

In the Twilight of the Turkish Empire

By CAPT. ALAN BOTT.

party brought from Yembo by

time of his prowess were all Arabs, for, in the words of Col. Lawrence,

solid and lived unhappily until a new way of inducement a bribe in golden set was procured for him from an sovereigns.

the northeastern extremity of the Red last great victory whereby Gen. Al-Ses, for this was to be its base when lenby overwhelmed the Turks. Feisul extended his operations to Palup the wells in the desert.

Finally, however, they occupied the railway near Maan, destroyed several bridges and came into contact the enemy between Maan and Akaba. Throughout July 2 they fought the Turks in a heat that made movement "The burning ground," Lawrence, "seared the skin of the forearms of our snipers, and camels agony of the sun burned flints."

Turks Fice in Panie.

Hemmed into a valley, the Turks deefter sunset old Auda, with fifty horseer some rising ground, shooting from the saddle as he came. The Turks, seized with panic, broke and scattered and the remainder of the small Arab slip and returned. force dashed down from the hillsides them. Some of the Turks escaped, but than their own total numbers. ng the great road which the Turks had constructed for the invasion of Egypt and entered Akaba in tri-

which from then onward was the base and general headquarters of the Arab Lawrence were raising the local Arab forward to a cloistered retirement in army. Behind it was a wonderful peasants, and soon they added to their regular force a body of several thouachievement. Nearly the whole of Arabia was cleared of Turks and the deserts were dominated by Feisul. Thenceforward the whole charac-

Thenceforward the whole character of the Arab operations changed. Pelsui's force now became the right flank of Gen. Allenby's armies, and had to act in cooperation with the British troops in Palestine. No longer could the Shelkha, vivid in colored robes, lead their men in wild camel charges. No longer could Feisui throw himself into the thick of the fight. Much against his will, he was induced to remain at headquarters and act as a General commanding an organized army.

the British, the Arabs' efforts, fine myself to matters which, though not recounted in the communiques,

of Bedouins who operated against the Turks all over the land of Moab. One of these, again led by Shereef Nazir was Col. Law- which helped the British in their descent to the Dead Sea and the Jorver the dreadful march had no way station of Jurf, and thence were advancing toward them. Therethe dreadth hart had hour. marched to Tafileh, a village of some upon they left Sheikh Saad to attack the hort measure of space. They 6,000 inhabitants, and summoned it to the smaller of these two columns. laughed. Thereupon old Auda gal-loped under their bullets to an open where he halted, and shouting in his soldiers. The dogs of villagers recogbim than they were of the Turks, cbeyed. They delivered up the Turkime to cut off the escaping Turks ish garrison and Nazir's force occu-

they halted by some bushes overlook- cry, wrapped his headcloth about his Turkish Dead Sea fleet was moored. in the saddle, galloped into the midst While the crews were breakfasting on shore the Bedouins dashed toward the Riddled with machine gun bullets, both shore, captured the fleet with its he and his horse fell dead on the crews, sunk the ships, and rode off Turkish lance points. Turkish garrison had begun to realize sisted only of motor launches and fishhimself King of the struction by irregular cavalry was than two smartly dressed Turkish it, taking no prisoners. naval officers, whom the Bedouins sent

After each of his successes Felsu his father's ally, always ending it with

This old chief has The Bedouins were quite unused to the been wounded 13 times and married 28 cold and the snow which they met in mes; and he has since 1900 killed 75 the hills of Moab. Wearing only a men in single combat. These 75 vic- cotton shirt and a woollen cloak, they many died of cold.

Airplanes Played Great Part, Airplanes played a great part in allegiance to the Grand Shereef of the linking of Feisul's army with the Mecca. Afterward he sat down to din- British forces in Palestine. Several for with Feisul. Half way through British machines were stationed at the meal he rose and with an apology Akaba. Each of their pilots and obleft the tent. Col. Lawrence and the servers whenever he went into the air immering and saw the Arab chief dress) and a small book containing beating something with a large stone. phrases in Arabic. If he were forced Auda returned and, speaking in a to land in a wild country distant from mumbling voice, asked pardon for his base he would substitute the head having eaten Feisul's bread with Turk- dress for his flying cap, for the bernous He opened his hand and would be useful in placating any fanaproduced a broken set of false teeth tie nomads who might approach. Then, which had, he explained, been made by reading from the book of phrases, he a Turkish dentist from Damascus. For would ask the nearest Arab to guide eeks afterward he could eat nothing him back to Akaba, promising him by

The Arab campaign of liberation was The main objective of the Arab crowned by a magnificent dash to army was now to capture Akaba, at Deraa and Damascus, as part of the

With Col. Lawrence and a few otner estine and Syria. A small force of British officers a force of a thousand camelmen under the command of Arabs, including camel corps, Vickers Shereef Nazir was detailed for the detachments, four quick firing guns, It marched through the two British airplanes and three ar-Hedjaz hills and, dynamiting the rails mored cars, set out from Akaba early as it passed, crossed the Pilgrim Rail- in September. They trekked over 290 way and so to the pathless central miles of desert, with only three wells desert of Arabia. There it wandered on the way, to Azarak, and from thence for weeks and lost many men from set out for Deraa. The armored cars hunger and thirst. The pains of meanwhile, made a lone attack on the thirst were especially intense, for Pilgrim Railway, north of Amman. when the Arabs approached Maan Halting before a four arched bridge they found that the Turks had blown the crews left their cars and destroyed it with 150 pounds of guncotton. Afterward they drove back to the main body and helped in the destruction of

The Arabs reached a point sour miles from Deraa, but there they were hadly harried by nine German airbadly shot about to be of use, and the only machine that remained to them was a BE-12, a type which is of little value for air fighting. Neverthethe manœuvres of its pilot soon enleaded themselves until evening. Just ticed the whole circus of enemy aircraft, four two seaters and four scouts, men, charged down a crooked hellow away from the Arab army. He flew westward, with the hostile machines in pursuit, and then, when his petrol was almost exhausted, gave them the

> The pilot landed, but ran his pus into rough ground, where it turned over and crashed. A pursuing Halberstadt circled over it and scored a direct hit with a bomb. The British pilot was uninjured and made the best of a bad job by transferring his Lewis gun to a little Ford car, in which he preventing any sortis of rolling sto

sand armed irregulars. The next few days were spent in further raids on the rallway, in cutting the Turkish telegraph wires, and in looting rolling

stock and stores.
Once again German airplanes sought tinually with bombs and machine gun the Arab, like the Turk, prefers almost anything to attacks from the air.

Col. Lawrence, therefore, went to amerak, where he was picked up by a British airplane and taken to General Headquarters in Palestine. He returned

they had finished breakfast, the pilots of these Bristol Fighters had been into the air twice, destroyed a Turkish two Afterward the Arabs were troubled no more by hostile aircraft. That pietely restored by a visit from the glant Handley Page machine which

eagle. The rest are mosquitoes. thus blocked the line of retreat for

large forces of Turks south of them The Turkish leaders received exag-

in consequence evacuated Deraa, leav The Arabs reached Sheikh Saad, where an airplane dropped a message The Turkish garrison They came into contact with the leaders was that of a pregnant woman

with Col. Lawrence and old Auda, was Setting out from Tafileh, the Bedouin Talal, the Sheikh of Tafaz, Having norsemen rode one night along the been forced to witness the massacre ast bank of the Dead Sea. At dawn of his own villagers he gave a horrible

Enraged by the massacre the Araba attacked furiously and relentlessly They cut the column into three and altogether destroyed two portions of

A body of Arab horsemen galloped to Deraa, captured the station in a whirlwind charge, destroyed what was left of the Turkish garrison and oc cupled the town. Soon afterward Felul's force came into contact with the right flank of Gen. Allenby's victorious armies, which were driving the routed of the British Fourth Division and guided then into Deraa.

Seeing that the Turks were utterly beaten, all the Arab populace in Syria were rising, and with 500 years of tyranny as an incentive were rou ng up the Turkish soldiery. Very took service under Feisul's standard, so that he was more than

With some help from the British across the Bulgarian frontier, from Horse Artillery Feisul's forces attacked frying pan to fire. at sunset near Kiswe. Before the day-

machine guns and thirty pieces of Turkish.

Arab flag hoisted by the population.

at their head, entered Damascus in tri- a goat for food. ome from the population. Rifles and revolvers were fired in the air, whips were cracked and the proceedings ended with a wild gallop through the celebrate the return of Damascus the Ancient-already a famous city in the days of Abraham-beneath Arabian

Echoes of that fantastic campaign of the Arabs, extending over a thousand miles of historic country between Mecca and Damascus, may now be Col. Lawrence as adviser, is at the Peace Conference. His dream, like that of other Pan-Arabian thinkers (besides being a soldier, Feisul is a poet and scholar of note), is of an Arab empire, with Damascus as capital, that will revive the more peaceful glories of Haroun-al-Raschid and other Arabian Caliphs. Whether the dream will be realized in the not too distant future depends on the sympathy and good will of Great Britain

As for Col. Lawrence-a worthy sucown kind as Lord Clive and Gen. Gor-don—when I last saw him in London

France and America.



The death of Talal, the Sheikh of Tafaz.

caught up with it Arab peasantry had enemy occupation since the Bolshevik retaken while reduced the number to 2,000.

light had faded the Turks were a seat-tered mob, trying to escape up the gendarmes demanded to see the slopes of Mania, where they were cut identity papers of civilians, particuoff by another Arab force that had larly those of Christians. Traveiling een waiting for them. The slaughter cross-country on foot was almost continued until midnight, when the last impossible, because of the plague of few hundred Turks were taken pris- destitute brigands that infested every part of Anatolia off the beaten track What Felsul's Force Accomplished. Other drawbacks were that, unlike In all, since Feisul's small force of vantines-whether Turk, Greek, Jewand the irregulars they raised had in was therefore very difficult, and that less than four weeks killed 5,000 Turks in any case a disguise was of little and captured about 8,000, besides 150 use without the ability to speak fluent

rtillery.

The first attempt of British prisoners
The victorious Arab army rode to to escape from Turkey was late in Damascus, where the burning ammu-nition dumps, exploded by the retreating Turks, turned night into day. The marine officers, bolted from Afionmorale of the Turks and Germans was Kara-Hissar and, in night marches now so low that without protest they covered the 150 miles that separated marched out of the city beneath the him from the coast. Then, when al-Next morning the Arab troops, with venturers were captured as a result of Col. Lawrence and the Shereef Nazir having aroused suspicions by buying

Grand Break for Freedom.

The grand epidemic of escapes and attempted escapes broke out in July and August. Forty officers made a bid Afton-Kara-Hissar, six from Constan tinople and one from Broussa, while several Tommies made a dash from the Taurus region.

Commander Cochrane in his second effort led a party of eight from Yougad over 350 miles of wild country, reached the coast, commandeered a Turkish motorboat and drove it to Cyprus and freedom. The only others who succeeded were Capt, White and I, who an hour each day. sailed to Odessa as stownways, travelled from thence to Bulgaria and Yeats-Brown and Paul Plan Escape finally reached Salopica.

Of the others all but three were caught and kept in captivity until the armistice. The three exceptions recarried out valuable propaganda work. and to make their way along the the Turkish Cabinet and was partly As for Col. Lawrence—a worthy suc-cessor to such great Britishers of his The remaining two were Capt. Yeats-Yeats-Brown and Paul escaped in garden with the six sentries all

strong enough to attack the only restraint column of the Fourth Turk lish Army. This had been reported as 6,000 strong, but by the time Feisul Curaine, both of which had been in caught up with it Arab peasantry had caught up with it Arab peasantry had

in the capital disguised as a girl by railings. The six sleepy sentries means of clothes lent him by Miss W. meanwhile were watching a stream He walked about quite openly for more of people going into the restauran the Ministry of War), and there he restaurant for a square meal-a thing

Last August there were in the Black desperation by the hundreds of vermin. rush of armed men, swords and spurs rang down the dark corridor, rifles were clicked, but despite the guards' and listened tensely for any stir in the protests the cracking and splintering garden. All was quiet. One sentry lit of wood continued, and the smell of another's cigarette. A third was playburnt bugs mingled with the other ing with a kitten. The others had ontaminations of the prison.

Another time a sentry, used to dealng with terrifled malefactors, hit a British officer. The result must have surprised him, if indeed he had time to realize what happened. He was sent punch under the jaw. Again there was a scene—the fallen sentry, the angry officer, the guards' glittering bayonets, the hurried arrival of the ommandant. But nothing happened. That incident, in fact, relieved the

loward the end of the war, and by way case their countrymen were victorious treatment. Thenceforth, instead of being shut up like wild animals, with a minimum of air and exercise, the captives in the Black Hole were alicwed out into the prison garden for

From this garden Yeats-Brown and Paul decided to escape. The most feasible plan was to squeeze through some iron railings which overlooked a mained hidden in Constantinople and big drop of a hundred and fifty feet I have already told the story of one of of an overhanging precipics until they them (Col. "Z"), who negotiated with reached a printing house, whence egress to the main square of the Min-

Opportunity came one evening at twilight, when the pair were in the

railings.

Yeats-Brown and Paul edged to the Yeats-Brown meanwhile was living far side of the garden, where were the than a month, but finally he, too, was near the entrance gate. They paid no captured. The Turkish police led him attention to the British officers, but to a dungeon in the Black Hole of Con- continued to look rather sadiy at the stantinople (by which name we knew Greek clerks who were entering the of which they themselves could only The pair stood on the edge of the

who at times gave the dungeons an railings and squeezed and pushed their bodies through the gap, thinking Saxon. One day the officers, goaded to every instant to hear the clamor of sentries and the drone of Martini bulcarried their beds into the passage and cleansed them by fire. There was a the railings and their flinching fiesh followed a moment later. They hung over the drop and looked

their backs turned.

They clambered along gently and reached the printing house situated just behind the railings. By then they were out of sight of the sentries, and to walk straight out of the gate near the way seemed clear across a patch the restaurant into the main square. factor. At any moment the sentries of ivy to a gap which would give in moments of intense stress one can in the garden might raise a hue and them entrance to the main square. Once they had gained its comparative of a situation in a flash. They saw away and a sentry stood over it. freedom they planned to stroll up to into the minds of the sentries, who the garage where the Ministry of War cars were kept.

Hopes Are Dashed.

they relied on being mistaken for Ger- if they acted instantly. man mechanics by the Turkish sentries. With a guttural word or two Brown and Paul slipped into a patch they would start up a car, drive out of shadow, threw away their hats and of the square and so to the Bulgarian taking out the fezzes which they allit was necessary to climb over the frontier. If stopped on the way they ways carried concealed under their would deliver a few German curses waistcoats, put them on their heads. and open out the throttle. Already Then they walked toward the square, light, which might have made them they imagined themselves arriving at Dedeagatsch in a 56 h. p. Mercedes, with full details (which they had already collected) of the defences of Constantinople, Tchachaldja and the

But these vivid hopes were short lived. The railings led past an open caught before he reached the outer pavement. No other persons, however, window at which three Turks were gate. Since the time of Mohammed stopped to look at them. sitting. Had the escaping Englishmen interposed their bodies between the been in a very unpleasant position. With one hand the Turks could have

were allowed other than Turkish of- the first place from Psamatla with the rather sleepy-and one Turkish officer. or else detained them, to wait like ity of dress seemed certain to mean wingless flies on a wall, until soldiers detection.

It was a horrid anti-climax, but they

they squeezed through the railings and their credentials. found themselves in the prison garden suddenly flattened.

Four sentries were looking listlessly fifth was by the gold fish pond. The pair resisted the temptation to quicken sixth stood at the railings about eighty yards away. After hurriedly dusting themselves Yeats-Brown and Paul toward the main square. Then the walked straight past the sixth sentry. He turned and looked at his watch

meaningly. "Just five minutes more," Teats-Brown urged, "we haven't had nearly enough exercise yet."

The sentry nodded and sighed, then turned to contemplate the Golden The Englishmen continued round the garden, breathlessly discussing plans.

They See a Light.

Their one remaining chance was sergeant of his suspicions. semetimes grasp the whole psychology were bored and unsuspecting. A sort their chance of freedom for the sake ployees of the Ministry and could main gate. By now they had reached Clad in their seedy civilian suits stroll unquestioned through the gate

It was now getting dark. Yeats-To understand their feelings it must visible to the sentries at the outer be remembered that nobody had ever gate and to the passers-by of three succeeded in escaping from this ancient streets. pris and the Turks prided them-railings and watched the performance litical suspect had made a desperate They clapped their hands heartly dash for liberty, but he had been when the pair arrived safely on the

a Turkish permit.

cannot remember, but Yeats-Brown thinks he spoke in staccato Italian. which Paul answered with Arabic imprecations. Near the gate Yeats-

"For God's sake, turn your trousers down." To his mind, tuned up to the intensity of the moment, such an odd-

They Mingle With the Greeks.

Mingling with the Greeks who were decided to go back. That return jour- coming out of the restaurant they nev was highly unpleasant, for there came very, very leisurely to the sen was not only a risk of death and de- try guarded gate. A pass was necestection, but also the possibility of look- sary both to enter and to leave this gate; but season ticket holders, so to All went well, however. Once more speak, were rarely asked to produce

As the British officers reached the again, with a sense of having been gate one of the sentries took a pace be changed his mind. In that instant at the diners in the restaurant. A faith almost faltered. However, the their pace or to look around.

Unostentatiously they continued man behind caught them up and looked curiously into their faces. He was a Turkish officer. They returned his gaze with careful composure. After hesitating a moment he went on to the out the sergeant of the guard, to whom he gave some instructions.
these orders related to Yeats-Brown
these orders related to Yeats-Brown hand in their direction. Too tired or too hurried to interrogate them himself, he had almost certainly told the

Time was now the most important cry. The garage was some distance decided that it was not worth risking

Yet they could not get out of the about the centre of the square. The only way out was through some more rallings at the far side. They found that owing to narrow spacing it was impossible to squeeza-through, as they had hoped, and that railings. This they did, feeling ter ribly conspicuous in the rising moon-

Two little girls stood outside the

the Conqueror no officer of any nationality had left the dungeon without Yeats-Brown and Paul boarded a tram to the European quarter of Pera, called They walked very slowly now, stop- on some friends, arranged for a hiding ping every now and then to gesticu- place, obtained a false mustache aptece late, after the manner of the Mediter- and-went to the local movies.